Dec. 4, 2018

PRELIMINARY DIGITAL RESEARCH REPORT
Veterans Legacy Program

PLEASE NOTE:
The following is a sample of undergraduate research (still in progress) at the University of Tennessee on veterans interred at Knoxville National Cemetery, as a part of the Veterans Legacy Program funded for 2018 by the V.A.

If you have further information about relatives buried at the Knoxville National Cemetery, please contact us at Center for the Study of War and Society, at csws@utk.edu.

Coleman, James Hurd (1839-1919)
Civil War veteran
“Joined Union Army 18 April 1862, Lt., Company D, 6th Tennessee. Discharged 28 July 1864”
[communication with family, living locally. See photograph]

Eckel, William Hugh (1896-1918)
A decorated local hero of the First World War

Second Lieutenant William Hugh Eckel was born in 1896. The Eckel family had been pioneer settlers in East Tennessee, originally from Germany. Before World War I, Hugh Eckel had been a member of Knoxville’s Boy Scout Troop 4, doing fourteen-mile hikes in the area. He was enrolled at University of Tennessee, where the University Record for 1917 shows him in the UT Battalion. He was then sent to train at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and was commissioned as second lieutenant. He was sent overseas with the 117th Infantry in May 1918. In October 1918, as part of the attack on the German Hindenburg Line defenses
by the 30th Division, near Ponchaux in northern France, Hugh Eckel undertook courageous assaults on
German machine-gun nests. His decoration citation speaks of hand to hand struggles with enemies and
extraordinary bravery under fire, for the cause of saving his comrades. At that moment, he was struck by a
shell and suffered wounds that led him to die two days later in hospital, on Oct. 9, 1918. He was
posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Eckel was originally buried in a British Military
Cemetery at Tincourt-Boucly in the Somme, then brought to Knoxville National Cemetery and reinterred on
April 1, 1921.

Hayes, Vertie Mae
World War II, Korea, Vietnam
Student researcher Alexis Lyden writes:
“My biggest interest. 25 years old at time of enlistment. African-American. Three years of college. Aviation
cadet and Women’s Army Corps. Service in World War II, Korea, Vietnam.”
“Enlisted Nov. 3, 1942”

Larew, Alvis
Spanish-American War
Originally from Knoxville, son of a Minister. Later appears to have moved to the Philippines.

Martin, Archie
World War II
Student researcher Will Oaks writes:
“Not only did he earn the Bronze Star for his actions in the siege of Myitkyina (17 May – 3 August 1944),
but he was also a reporter with his hometown newspaper, the McComb Daily Journal in McComb,
Mississippi. He was drafted along with his two brothers, one of whom was his twin. Given his connections
to the papers in the region, whenever he wrote back home, the letters were often published in the papers.
Thus, I have found about three to four exquisite letters written by Martin detailing his life and observations
while serving in the China-Burma-India Theatre. They read like an amateur ethnography of sorts, and one
compares Indian farming to what he was familiar with in Mississippi and comments on the place of
Christians in Indian society as he sees it. I’ll also include a citation in a footnote below. From what I can
tell, it looks like he attained the rank of staff sergeant.”

McCammon, Hilton.
Vietnam Veteran
Student researcher Will Oaks writes:
“McCammon was both a two-time Bronze Star decorated soldier and, based on a letter published in the
News-Sentinel, gave voice to societal concern about the politics of deployment and the draft system during
the Vietnam War. McCammon was involved in Operation Junction City (22 February – 14 May 1967),
during which he “ignored hostile fire and led an engineer team to a Viet Cong base camp to lay mines and
destroy tunnels and installations.” This action in specific earned him the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross, a
decoration from the government of South Vietnam. His second Bronze Star came when he “disregarded
heavy enemy fire from an attack by 300 Viet Cong to ascertain enemy locations.” Simultaneously, he also
searched the battlefield for wounded soldiers when he saw that his platoon had lost its two vehicles, and he
even took temporary command when he found that the platoon leader had been critically wounded. By
1974, McCammon attained the rank of sergeant major. He was a local of Knoxville, having graduated from
Young High School. The most interesting find I have about McCammon was a letter he sent to
Representative John Duncan in October, 1966. The letter was published in the Knoxville News-Sentinel (it
even made the front page), and in it he notes one Robert J. Allison, who secured a transfer from an
engineering company deployed in Vietnam to Ft. Rucker, Alabama after only two months in country.
McCammon claimed that, despite the official line being that Allison had been assigned as a mechanical

1 “Gets Bronze Star” in McComb Daily Journal (McComb Mississippi), 9 February 1945.
2 “Martin Boys Are Surviving, Archie Writes Mr. Naul [His grandfather]” in McComb Daily Journal,
20 October 1943.
3 “McCammon Gets Second Award” in Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 February 1968.
engineering assistant at Ft. Rucker, the transfer represented the unfair power that Congress had over deployments. Allegedly Allison had written to his congressman, John Blatnik, requesting that he do something to get him out of “leaning on a shovel.”\(^5\) McCammon wrote that Allison’s was a case of “educational attainment”, that “incidents such as this seriously affect the morale here,” and, most poignantly, that “most mothers would be happy to have a poor, uneducated son still alive to serve their country.”

**Mackenzie, Laughlin**

**Civil War, 79th New York Highland Regiment**

Also listed as Lochlan McKinsey, Laughland McKenzie.


Buried Jan. 1864, in the inner circle of the original cemetery arrangement (see lithograph on cover of *Knoxville National Cemetery: A Short History*).

He was among a group of brothers who enlisted in the regiment, which included many of the members of the Caledonian Club in New York, founded in 1856. See letter collection in text by Sue Mackenzie Thornton, great-granddaughter of Donald D. Mackenzie, *A Scotsman’s Tale of the Civil War*.

**Medley, James Willard.**

**Korean War**

Student researcher Will Oaks writes:

“I am still working on Medley, as his seems to be quite the story. He was a native of Knoxville, born in 1923, and according to the 1940 census lived in East Knoxville and worked as a “circular carrier” for Western Union. His father was a laborer in the “soft drink manufacturing” industry, so I suspect that he worked at the Coca Cola bottling plant where the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* now has its main office. According to casualty reports, he was injured twice in the Korean War, both times by missile strikes.\(^6\) He returned to duty after the first incident (November 1950), but was discharged after the second (January 1951). He attained the rank of sergeant first class and was a soldier in the 24th Infantry Division, one of the first to be deployed to Korea as they were stationed in Japan when North Korea invaded the South. He was awarded the silver star, and I am still trying to locate the citation for that. I think I have also found living relatives and might be able to conduct an interview with them.”

**Mitchell, Orren**

**UT student in agriculture, World War II veteran**

Student researcher Will Oaks writes:

“Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell won the Bronze Star, and I am still trying to find the citation for that. He was a local guy, however, having been born and raised in Madisonville in Monroe County. He attended UT from 1938 to 1942, and got a degree in agricultural engineering. He was even in the Agriculture Club, and I found a photo of him in the club in a UT yearbook… He served in the Second World War, and afterwards joined the Army National Guard.\(^7\) He died July 24, 1970 at the age of 50, while he was an employee at Mid-South Engineering Company. I also have a line to living relatives, and I am hoping that they will be able to help with materials or even an interview.”

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\(^6\) Korean War Casualty File, 2/13/1950-12/31/1953; Records on Korean War Dead and Wounded Army Casualties, 1950-1970; Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, Record Group 407; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

\(^7\) *United States Military Registers, 1902–1985* (Salem, Oregon: Oregon State Library), page 727.
Moore, Kyle Campbell (1908-1945)

World War II, memorialized at Knoxville National Cemetery, as body missing

Lt. Commander Moore’s memorialization at Knoxville National Cemetery is a special case, and matches the amazing context of his life and his family, and their role in local history. His widow, Mrs. Katherine Davis Moore, was for decades a tremendously generous donor to the UT Center for the Study of War and Society. The CSWS Fall 2010 newsletter, War Stories, featured a story entitled “Kyle Campbell Moore: Homegrown Hero”:

“More than 65 years ago on July 30, 1945, the battle cruiser USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-58. Many of you may know the story of the ship’s secret mission that helped end the war, the sinking, the nightmarish 5-day ordeal of the survivors, and the court-martial of Capt. Charles B. McVay III. But you may not know there were five Knoxvillians who made the ultimate sacrifice that night: Earl O. Henry, Stanley F. Jones, Glenn E. Miller, Carey L. Underwood, and the one memorialized in this issue, Kyle C. Moore.

Born December 9, 1908, Kyle Campbell Moore played football at Knoxville High School, where he was MVP for two years on the undefeated Trojan team, as well as city tennis champion for two years. He entered the University of Tennessee as a pre-med student; but when his plans fell victim to the Great Depression, he used the skills he developed as an editor of Knoxville High’s school newspaper, the Blue and White, to go to work for The Knoxville Journal as a city reporter.

For the next 13 years he reported the city’s news and developed into an outstanding photographer. Moore was the Journal’s only photographer and was also the southeastern representative for The New York Times and Hearst’s International News Service. He had one of the Times’ portable telephoto machines that he could attach to a telephone for transmitting images to the home office. Among the big stories he covered were President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s trips to East Tennessee during the busy TVA dam-building years. He photographed all these visits, and in 1940, as an employee of TVA’s information office, he also covered President Roosevelt’s dedication of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Perhaps most important, during his years as a reporter, he met Katherine Davis, the UT journalism student who would become his wife.

Moore was commissioned lieutenant (jg) in the Navy Reserve the day after Pearl Harbor and was called immediately to active duty. He reported to the navy’s public relations office for the 8th Naval District in New Orleans, where he pushed hard for sea duty. He graduated from Northwestern University Midshipmen’s School in July 1942 and was ordered to report to the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis. He and Katherine were married on July 23, only a week before he reported for duty aboard the cruiser in the Aleutians.

For the next 3 years Moore served aboard the Indianapolis throughout the Pacific. His father, John Moore, was a talented mechanical engineer, and Kyle Moore apparently inherited that talent, because in April 1943 he was promoted to lieutenant commander and named officer-in-charge of the hull department (construction, repairs, and damage control). He was the first reserve officer to hold that post on a capital ship. After a kamikaze attack in March 1945, he was able to repair the ship in time to get it to San Francisco to take aboard the components and the uranium for the first atomic weapon, the bomb codenamed “Little Boy,” which was delivered to Tinian Island on July 26, 1945.

Four days later, after a brief stop at Guam on the way to Leyte, the USS Indianapolis was torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-58 around midnight on July 30. Lt. Cdr. Moore was supervisor-of-the-watch on the bridge. He survived the first explosions and went below twice to survey the damage, which was so massive that the ship sank in just 12 minutes. Only 316 of the 1,197 men on board survived. For his efforts to save his ship, Lt. Cdr. Moore was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for “heroism beyond the call of duty.”

Katherine Moore says her husband—“Kasey” to his shipmates—“was the most interesting man I’ve ever known. He was smart, talented, skilled, creative, industrious, generous, sensitive, a true Scot in many ways, unafraid, sincere, funny, and loving. He never lost a friend or forgave an enemy. He was an athlete, an avid sportsman, a crack shot, and gentle with his hunting dogs. He was a good father, a compassionate son, a wonderful husband, and a splendid naval officer.”

The Kyle Campbell Moore Endowment was established in 2000 at the Center for the Study of War and Society by Katherine Davis Moore (Knoxville ’39) in memory of her husband. We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Moore and her late sister, Betty Davis, for their generosity and are proud to play a part in preserving the memory of such brave souls as Lt. Cdr. Moore.

One should add that the life of Mrs. Moore, the widow of Commander Moore, says a lot about the history of veteran families. Most obviously, she survived her husband by 70 years! She passed away in 2015 at the age of 100 in Knoxville. Her remarkable life proved full and rewarding. She was a 1939 UT graduate, who
taught in the English department at University of Tennessee, on a Fulbright grant to Greece, and on an exchange program in Scotland. She was a charter member of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra.

Neyland, Robert Reese (1892-1962)
Famed football player and legendary coach at UT from 1926-1952, World War II service

Student researcher Will Oaks writes:

“In addition to his status as one of the most renowned coaches in college football, Robert Neyland was also a decorated veteran, having served in the two world wars. During his service in World War II alone he reached the rank of brigadier general and earned the Distinguished Service Medal, a Legion of Merit with an oak leaf, and was made a member of both the Order of the British Empire and China’s Order of Cloud and Banner. He was also an active officer during his early coaching career, during which time he served as a professor of military science at UT as well as the district engineer in both Chattanooga and Nashville. From 1929 to 1934, Neyland took an annual furlough from these official duties in order to coach the team in Knoxville, thus allowing him to serve in both roles nearly simultaneously.\

Although the city of Knoxville is immensely proud of his service (he was widely known as “The Major,” and even when he was promoted to colonel, a name change would not have seemed “anywhere near being natural”), sorrow abounded whenever Neyland’s military obligations kept him from coaching. In 1934, when it was announced that Neyland would be deployed to the Panama Canal Zone to head up the 11th Engineers, an attempted coup of sorts developed. Major George Berry, with the support of the UT Alumni Association, petitioned President Franklin Roosevelt to appoint Neyland as the commandant of the University of Tennessee for a four year period, having written that such an executive order would be “received not only with enthusiasm but with a deeply-rooted gratitude from not only the 16,000 membership of the University of Tennessee, Alumni Association, but the entire citizenship.” The War Department was insistent on deploying Neyland, however, as a new post for him would necessitate a complete reworking of the deployment schedule, thus the attempt ended in failure.

In 1935, following his tour of duty in Panama, Neyland retired from the Army in order to serve as UT’s full-time football coach. Five years later, though, the clouds of war were threatening the United States. By March of 1941, rumors began to circulate that the Army was going to recall Neyland into service, a nationally-syndicated sports columnist at one point having spread the rumor in print. On April 28, 1941, eight months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the rumors came true when the Army assigned Neyland to

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8 C.J. Lilley, 'Tennessee Will Keep Neyland' in Knoxville News-Sentinel (Knoxville, TN), 26 November 1929.
11 “Neyland Army Call Officially Denied” in Knoxville News-Sentinel (Knoxville, TN), 10 March 1941.
Norfolk, Virginia as the district engineer. The front page story that the Knoxville News-Sentinel published on the day referred to the call as a “deprivation” for the UT community, yet it seems only fitting that a state with such a storied tradition of military service should have such a man in charge of its university’s football program.12

Tucker, Willis Norton.
World War II
Tucker attended Knoxville High School, played football at UT under Coach Neyland (see above), and enlisted in 1941. He was killed in action in Hürtgen Forest on November 28, 1944. Tucker was one of four UT football players killed in the European theater of World War II. At first buried in Belgium, then reinterred at Knoxville National Cemetery in 1947. Tucker and his fellow players were honored in 2006 by UT (see Fred Brown article in Knoxville News-Sentinel, Sept. 9, 2006).

Murphy, Charles
World War II
Student researcher Will Oaks writes:
“Throughout film history, wars have often been the source of inspiration for many an action hero. Classic autobiographical pictures like Sgt. York and To Hell and Back have highlighted the exploits of some of the United States’ most renowned soldiers. Likewise, recent blockbusters like Saving Private Ryan and The Thin Red Line have revealed that audiences still harbor a fascination with war, a phenomenon with which many today, due in large part to the lack of a major war in the last 50 years, have little personal experience aside from having relatives or friends who have served. Even the most loyal of film adaptations, however, dramatize these historical periods to attract audiences. It is possible to hear of heroic deeds, though, without obfuscating the context of the matter. Within the oral history files of the Center for the Study of War and Society there are numerous interviews with veterans of a whole assortment of conflicts, and their narratives have often proven to be entertaining and educational. In addition to being one of the more thorough interviews in the collection (three interviews were done with this man over a period of several years), the story of Charles Murphy came across almost like a war novel, and his experiences gave a detailed glimpse into what it was like not only to serve in the venerable 1st Infantry Division but also the rich civilian backgrounds of service men and women during WWII.

Murphy’s military life essentially started when he was five years old. In 1922, he enrolled at the McDonough School in Baltimore, Maryland. The school was established in 1873 as a semi-military boarding academy specifically for orphans. Murphy qualified as his father died in WWI, and his mother was a casualty of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic.13 He attributed not only his military career but also his life’s successes to the regimentation and discipline omnipresent during his time at McDonough.14 Indeed, after his boarding school, Murphy sought to attend the US Military Academy at West Point, New York, although poor eyesight kept him from successfully matriculating. Despite this setback, Murphy still wanted to get a higher education, specifically a degree in engineering. He saved $100 from his job as a millwright at Western Electric and consulted with company about how to fulfill this goal. What greeted Murphy was a barrage of possible schools, including MIT, Cal Tech, and Georgia Tech. According to Murphy, though, “… down about 10 [on the list], was the first university I saw: The University of Tennessee,” and it was this qualification that captivated him.15 He wrote to the dean of men at the time, Felix Massey, and the warm welcome that he received from the dean ultimately sealed the deal, so to speak.

Murphy’s time at the university certainly was not wasted. While UT required two years of ROTC participation from all male students, Murphy was involved for all four years. Shortly after he graduated, he

12 “Neyland Called to Army, U-T Left Without Coach” in Knoxville News-Sentinel (Knoxville, TN), 28 April 1941.
13 Murphy, Charles Everett. Interview with Charles Johnson, Conducted April 13, 1993, Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, Page 3.
14 Murphy, Charles Everett. Interviewer unknown, Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, Page 28.
15 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 4.
was able to find work at Lockheed in Hollywood, California, but the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 quickly drove Murphy back into the service. Despite protestation from the recruiting officers, Murphy found himself in England by August of 1942. He was a captain and the commanding officer of Company A of the 1st Engineer Battalion, itself a component of the 1st Infantry Division. After training in amphibious warfare off the coast of Scotland, Murphy and his division participated in Operation Torch in November of 1942. They were an element of the Central Task Force, whose mission it was to secure the city of Oran in Algeria. From here, Murphy would participate in numerous battles across North Africa, including those at Arzew, Algeria (November 8, 1943) and El Guettar, Tunisia (March 13-April 7, 1943). During these operations, Murphy’s forces encountered resistance from elements of the German Afrikakorps as well as the French Foreign Legion, which had divided itself between the Free French government and that of Vichy France. He also served alongside British and French forces, given the international nature of Allied armies. In fact, Murphy had the opportunity to go on a reconnaissance mission with members of the Goumier; North African nomads working for the French. Their stealth and ferocity were legendary, their practice of cutting off the ears of every second fallen enemy having perpetuated this reputation. Although he experienced numerous acts of brutality in WWII, participating in the reconnaissance raids with the Goumier was where he first slit a soldier’s throat, and he modestly said of the very personal action that “it is not a pleasant situation.”

The highlight of Murphy’s WWII service came on June 6th, 1944, where he earned a Silver Star for leading his company with bravery under fire during the landings at Omaha Beach during Operation Overlord. The full citation may be read in the footnote below. Murphy and his company were some of the first to come ashore (at 7:30 AM), and their task as to clear a hole through the sea wall and fortifications so that forces arriving later could break through. When he landed, though, Murphy’s boat hit a mine and threw him from the boat. He struggled through the disorientation and made it to cover, but not before getting hit. The bullet hit his field glasses case, which kept the round from penetrating. In his own words: “The water washing the back of my neck. I couldn’t move my left arm or my left leg. Oh jeez, I was wondering. You know the feeling is how bad are you hit when you first wake up, and you’re scared to death to reach and find out. Where, is that a big hole or a little hole!” As a result of these wounds Murphy also was awarded a Purple Heart, but he was one of the only men from that landing craft to survive the incident.

In their drive to push the Germans back, Murphy’s company eventually made it as far as Cheb in Czechoslovakia. International politics, though, kept them from staying there. The company pulled back to Marienbad to abide by prior territorial agreements with the Soviets, although Murphy maintained a personal animosity towards the Soviets, and he even stated that he was a “little ready to start another war!” Indeed, he continuously had problems with the Soviet soldiers across the border honoring whatever agreements existed between them at a local level. One incident that he described sounded almost like a prelude for World War III. Soviet patrols continuously violated the agreed-upon patrol schedule that existed between Murphy’s company and the Soviet forces. While the commanding officer of the Soviets denied that they were doing so, Murphy acted as though the soldiers were Germans pretending to be Soviet soldiers and openly threatened to execute them. This action forced the Soviet officer to capitulate and apologize before the whole of Murphy’s company.

Although Murphy feared that his Division would spearhead the proposed invasion of Japan following the end of the war in Europe, Japan’s surrender preventing this, and Murphy was honorably

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16 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 2.
17 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 9.
18 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 9-10.
19 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 11.
20 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 13.
21 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 37. “Citation for Silver Star. Charles E. Murphy. 0413695. Captain. Company A. 1st Engineer Combat Battalion. For gallantry in action in the vicinity of St.-Larent-sur-Mer, Normandy, France, 6 June 1944. The courage and cool determination with which Captain Murphy directed engineer operations were responsible for the only beach exit cleared on D-Day. Although wounded, Captain Murphy carried out vital reconnaissance under intense fire and maintained constant supervision of the many elements of his command. His skill and gallant devotion to duty strongly influenced the success of the invasion. Residence at appointment: Hollywood, CA. Citation for Silver Star.”
22 Murphy Interview, April 13, 1993, Page 25.
23 Murphy Interview, Unknown date, Page 11.
24 Murphy Interview, Unknown date, Page 13.
discharged from the Army and returned to Knoxville. Murphy found employment first with the K-25 plant that had recently been constructed in Oak Ridge, Tennessee as part of the Manhattan Project before moving to Y-12 and then ultimately on to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where he worked for 35 years. Murphy remained in the reserves during his working years, however, and he continued to occasionally teach both ROTC units and for the Commanding General Staff School.

What was notable about the story of Charles Murphy is how it fit into the cultural notion of the “American Dream.” Like any Ragged Dick story, Murphy endured setbacks at an early age, from the deaths of his parents to his rejection from West Point. He persevered nonetheless and found alternative means to achieve those same goals. The author thinks that it is fair to say that Murphy essentially had to shed his childhood at the age of five, when he enrolled at McDonough. The uniqueness of Murphy’s story attested to the fact that there was no such thing as an archetypical soldier, and it justified military history conducted from the bottom up as a way to study this diversity within its social contexts in addition to the military and political schools of history."

GROUP BURIALS AT KNOXVILLE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Researcher Will Oaks writes the following summaries:

T/SGT John DeLaloire, 2nd LT Gilbert Kyer, 1st LT Lawrence Murphy, T/SGT William Popham, 2nd LT Joseph Rotundo

Although the Knoxville News-Sentinel claimed that they were shot down over Belgium, the men and their B-24 Liberator actually went down over Ploesti, Romania on August 1, 1944. Their mission was to destroy Romanian oil facilities in the city, and it was a component of Operation Tidal Wave. Lt. Kyer was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his role in the raid. As it turns out, two men survived the crash, one being Harold Yost, the bomber’s engineer. According to Yost, Kyer was “an inspiration to his crew.”

PFC Thurston James, PVT Warren H. Price, PVT Charles Reeves, T/SGT Bolick Smulik

Given the nature of their burial and their ranks, it is my assumption that these men were a tank crew. That hypothesis is further supported by Smulik’s credentials: he was assigned to the 741st Tank Battalion, and he was the leader of a tank dozer crew at the time of his death. Smulik was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions during D-Day, his company (A) having the specific task of providing covering fire from the water’s edge upon their landing. While companies B and C received the unusual duplex drive floatation system for the mission, Smulik’s crew operated M4 Sherman tanks without the augmentation. Although he was awarded the Cross posthumously, his official date of death was August 1, 1944.

2nd LT Marshall Kilner, 2nd LT Harvey Petri, 2nd LT John Fender, T/SGT Henry Madden, SGT Secondo Molina, PVT Simon Robinson

These men perished in a B-24 bomber crash that occurred off the coast of Puerto Rico, although the exact nature and route of their journey is still a bit vague at the moment. Extant family members at the time assumed that the group were on their way to Africa. The family of Fender claims, though, that the crew were on their way from Trinidad when they crashed. Emphasis must be placed on “crash” as it appears that the bomber was not engaged in combat at the time of the incident. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this story, though, was how involved the Knoxville community appears to have been in the funeral. Although 12 relatives of the victims were at the graveside, the

25 Murphy, Charles Everett, Interview with Stan Tinsley, Conducted September 5, 1990, Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, Page 27.
26 Murphy Interview, Unknown date, Page 17.
attendance was some 500 people according a lengthy article in the Knoxville News-Sentinel on the event. Additionally, the Knoxville High School Band led the procession, the hearses right behind them, and later performed a rendition of “Onward Christian Soldiers.” “Veterans groups and patriotic organizations” participated in the occasion as pallbearers.